

December 2006

## New Expression: December 2006 (Volume 29)

Columbia College Chicago

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NEW EXPRESSION

BY TEENS, FOR TEENS, ABOUT TEENS

december 2006

If I get more money,  
will that improve school  
performance?

# GOOD TEACHERS TO BE OFFERED BONUSES



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## This Month in NE

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## Teacher Incentive Program to Improve teacher quality and leadership

**By Vince Dixon**  
Gwendolyn Brooks

While serving as Principal for a Day at Orr High School, Mayor Daley announced that the Chicago Public Schools (CPS) has been awarded a \$27.5 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education.

The grant, the largest federal grant CPS has ever received, will be used to raise the salaries of inner city teachers over the next five years. CPS hopes that the incentive pay will improve the leadership opportunities and higher classroom skills while also raising student test scores.

The merit pay also sets out to promote interest in schools of struggling neighborhoods.

"I am pleased to announce this Teacher Incentive Fund grant to the Chicago Public Schools, which will encourage more experienced teachers to work at high-poverty schools where they can make a real difference in raising student achievement," says U.S. Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings.

During the first year of the grant, 40 schools will be chosen to participate in the program. Ten of the schools will participate during the 2007-2008 school year. As the years approach, the remaining schools will be included.

Teacher bonuses will be based on improved test scores and evaluations. Participants will also receive higher positions within their school and become better involved with professional decision planning.

Such involvement is what Mayor Daley says is most important.

"There is nothing more important to our schools than quality teachers," Mayor Daley said. "We have excellent educators in schools across the city, and this grant will help us build on that strength by providing our teachers with the support and leadership opportunities they need and deserve."

Principals and other school staff will also receive bonuses based on student achievement. Schools of low income communities are given priority when schools are chosen for the program. To be eligible, 75% of the school's faculty would have to improve.

*"There is nothing more important to our schools than quality teachers," Mayor Daley said. "We have excellent educators in schools across the city, and this grant will help us build on that strength by providing our teachers with the support and leadership opportunities they need and deserve."*

### NEW EXPRESSION PUBLISHING

#### ORGANIZATION

New Expression is made up of Chicago area teens learning journalism skills and committing to write relevant stories for their peers. Youth Communication is a non-profit organization that publishes New Expression with the same mission since 1976 of training students and publishing an authentic teen voice.

#### EDITORIAL

New Expression welcomes reader's comments about stories expressed in this issue and more importantly stories that you would like covered. Please send your comments to our fax 312 922 7151 or email us at [Editor@NewExpression.org](mailto:Editor@NewExpression.org) or just give us a call at 312 922 7150 with your name and school and contact information.

**Errors & Omissions** — New Expression attempts to be factual and accurate in our reporting. Please contact us if you feel any information does not meet this standard.

#### SUBSCRIPTIONS/DELIVERY

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New Expression is delivered FREE of charge to 215 schools, libraries and community organizations. Call our office at 312 922 7150 to arrange your drop-off.

General subscription rates are \$5 per year paid in advance. Mail checks with address information to Youth Communication, c/o Columbia College Chicago, 619 S. Wabash Ave., Suite YC207, Chicago, IL 60605.

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## U.S. award to Jones a 1st for CPS high schools

**BY ROSALIND ROSS**

Education Reporter

Jones College Prep in the South Loop has become the first Chicago public high school to receive a federal Blue-Ribbon School award in the 24-year history of the academic honor.

The selective-enrollment school won for posting dramatic test-score improvement with a largely low-income population.

Jones Principal Donald Fraynd noted that last year, when Jones zoomed from No. 17 to No. 8 in the state in the Sun-Times annual high school rankings, it had the largest percentage of low-income kids -- nearly 61 percent -- among Illinois' 100 highest-scoring public high schools.

"I think the award just recognizes that any student, regardless of background, can achieve to a high level, if put in the right environment," Fraynd said.

'Hugely important milestone'

Over the last five years in reading, the number of Jones students passing state tests has risen from 79 percent to 87 percent overall, from 78 percent to 88 percent among low-income students, from

75 percent to 90 percent among African-American students, and from 82 percent to 94 percent among Hispanic students.

Jones was among 49 high schools nationally to receive the 2006 U.S. Department of Education award. Schools are nominated by state departments of education.

"It's a hugely important milestone," said Chicago Public Schools CEO Arne Duncan.

Jones uses common teacher planning periods to encourage collegial brainstorming, a suite of ACT tests to track student growth and identify weaknesses, and "differentiated" lessons to provide challenging work for all levels of kids.

The school values its diversity. It's a third Hispanic, 30 percent black, a quarter white, 14 percent Asian and 10 percent special education.

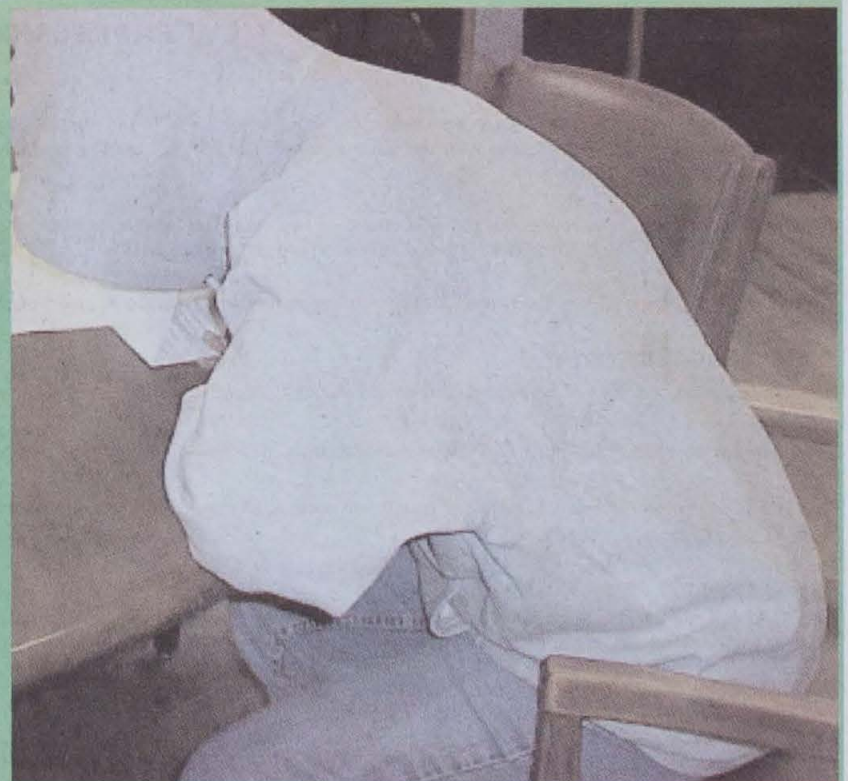
Said Fraynd: "One of the big reasons people come to Jones is for all the different kinds of people here."

[rrossi@suntimes.com](mailto:rrossi@suntimes.com)

**This story was originally printed on November 30, 2006 in the Suntimes**

## Sitting up straight is bad!

Remember when your mother told you to sit up straight or you'll get a hump? Well, a study done by Scottish Researchers at Woodend Hospital in Aberdeen, Scotland shows that sitting at a 135 degree angle as you would in a La-z Boy chair is the best position for your back. Researchers used a positional MRI scanner to collect images from 22 healthy volunteers with no history of back pain or surgery. The scanner allowed patients to move around, the opposite of a usual MRI where the patient isn't allowed to move and has to lie flat. This type of MRI permits scientists to observe how different body positions affect the back, spine, and the affect of an upright posture. The volunteers posed in three different sitting positions, and researchers determined sitting at 135 degree angle was the best. At a 135 degree angle, your body is in the most natural positions similar to your body floating in water. Although sitting at this angle minimizes stress to the discs, it is not always achievable when working. You can remedy this by keeping your feet on the floor and raising the chair to increase the angle between the thighs and back. Researchers state that though this position helps decrease stress, it is never good to stay in one position for a large amount of time.





metro

# Macy's Windows





# Chicago Events

By Lori Moody  
Curie High School

## Big Jam 7 Concert

A long awaited concert for many, Big Jam is the annual event hosted by Chicago's WGCI radio station and Pepsi. The show features artists such as Omarion, NE-YO, Yung Joc, Pretty Ricky, and many more.

Located at All State Arena,  
Rosemont, IL

Thursday December 28, 2006 at  
7:00 PM.



## Ice Rink at Millennium Park

What better way to set off the holiday than skating Downtown in Millennium Park with the city's grand lights display? This rink is family friendly and fun for your whole group.

Free Admission. Skate rentals price: \$7

Located @ 55 North Michigan Avenue.

## "A Christmas Carol"

This timeless story of Christmas and the gift of sharing are playing at the Goodman Theatre. The Goodman Theatre puts on "A Christmas Carol" annually with attractive and state of the art stage props. Also, the acting is great, which is a big plus. Student discounts are available.

Located @ 170 N. Dearborn St.,  
Chicago

November 17-December 30, 2006

Box Office: 312.443.3800



## New Year's Eve Fireworks

Are you looking for something to do on New Year's Eve? The city is hosting a fireworks display at Buckingham Fountain to kick off the New Year with a big bang. There will be music and more. The celebration begins at 10 pm with fireworks. Free.

## Ronald McDonald's New Year's Eve Bash at Navy Pier

December 31st, 2006  
There will probably be several

firework displays happening all around the Chicago area, but the Ronald McDonald New Year's Eve Bash looks promising. Fire works begin at 7pm for the kids, but a final display of the natural man made fire power is at the stroke of midnight, and there will be another display for those who have other plans on New Year's eve on January 1st at 7pm. Oh yeah, did I mention that it's free?

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## Powerful Voices, Powerful Missions, and all through the Power of Children

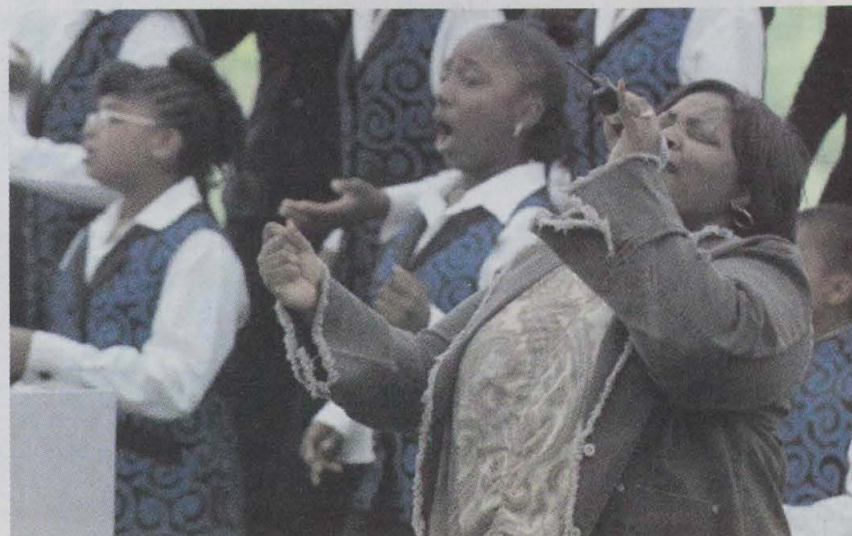
**By Sharonda Underwood**  
Morgan Park

You have heard of telethons, fundraisers, and the sad looking TV commercials for the organization Feed the Children. But have you heard of a concert event recorded and viewed internationally by a group of young people for the cause? Well, that's the type of concert I attended in November at Christ Universal Temple. The featured choir was known but the one and only Walt Whitman and the Soul Children of Chicago. They sung numerous songs that from the beginning had the people on their feet. Everyone was praising God and cheering them on as the "Stomp"ed the house down and took us on a vacation to the island of Jamaica "mon," through song. This first segment of the TV taping is to air in December for the Feed the Children event and the second half, which was dedicated to Christmas with Christmas décor and Christmas carols, in December 2007. By 9 o'clock I had had enough and needed to go home to finish up some homework, however they did not complete the taping until about ten that night. Nonetheless, I left the concert refreshed and with a new outlook on life.

*"My purpose and vision is to education the minds, elevate the spirits and illuminate the souls of our children and audiences worldwide," says Mr. Whitman.*

25 years ago, Mr. Whitman opened the doors of his choir to young fervent, God-loving and God-seeking youth who loved to sing. This choir has grown phenomenally, seeing as how it originated as a Catholic choir having concerts at St. John DeLaSalle High School. They perform all over the world to countries like Brazil and Israel, as their way of "Reaching the Nations," the name of their 2005 released album. He never would have guessed that they would be the most inspiring and recognized youth choir in the world.

I happened to get the chance to talk to a couple of the members, Sonya Curtis and Jordan Ross, and to Mrs. Shirley Whitman, the Director's mother. Mrs. Whitman informed me of the history of the choir and even gave me a few of the stars that they have performed with, at least those that she could think of at the moment. They were Neil Diamond, Vickie Winans, R. Kelly, Mavis Staples, Kirk Franklin, several presidents, and at a Black History event hosted by Oprah Winfrey herself. The girls had something totally different for me to talk about. Jordan, 15 year-old, joined the Soul Children about a year ago. "I joined the choir because singing is a big part of my life and my mother always said that me and my sisters should use our talents for the Lord and something productive. So, I figured this choir was perfect and would surround me with people I share similar interests that are around my



age and who I can praise freely with." I asked Jordan what the most exciting event in the past was for her and the most exciting event coming for them in the future. "I would say the trip to Biloxi, Mississippi was the best. We sang for Hurricane Katrina victims." She said that the reaction of the people lifted her up and made her feel good about herself knowing that she was blessed by God to be in the position she is in today. Sonya, freshman at Columbia College, was asked the same questions. Sonya joined in the eighth grade though and like Jordan needed something productive to do with her time and talents.

*"I guess I can say the Soul Children changed my life and it helped bring me closer to God."*

Her most exciting performance just happened to be her very first performance, which was held at the Arie Crown Theater. "I could think was that all the people I love have been on this stage," says Sonya. It was new and fun to her. Like Jordan, both girls are looking forward to the world traveling the choir is supposed to do in the upcoming summer.

If you would like to get info on how to donate or be apart of the Walt Whitman and the Soul Children of Chicago, you can call at (773) 881-8120.

**Soul Children of Chicago**  
P.O. Box 201247  
Chicago, IL 60620  
Ph: (773) 881-8120  
Attention: Walter Whitman



# REPORT CARD FOR YOUR SCHOOL

Submit your "Report Card" with 6 grades to [HYPERLINK "mailto:Editor@NewExpression.org"](mailto:Editor@NewExpression.org)  
[Editor@NewExpression.org](mailto:Editor@NewExpression.org) by January 15, 2007. The school submitting the most report cards will be featured in the next issue of NEW EXPRESSION.

**1. EDUCATION** Consideration: Courses offered at our school will help me be successful in preparing for my career choice. Teachers challenge me to do my best but are also fair and supportive. They know me personally and encourage me to develop my individual potential to the best of my ability.

**A B C D F**

COMMENT: \_\_\_\_\_

**2. STUDENT VOICE** Consideration: Principal and faculty ask us about what's bothering us and discuss new policies that affect us. When decisions are made, they explain their logic and listen to our feedback and concerns.

**A B C D F**

COMMENT: \_\_\_\_\_

**3. FOOD SERVICE** Consideration: Food is good with wide variety of choices and served well. Food is healthy but not nasty. Cafeteria has space and we are allowed time to enjoy our meals.

**A B C D F**

COMMENT: \_\_\_\_\_

**4. SPORTS & ACTIVITIES** Consideration: We have many opportunities to play sports and participate in other activities at school. Our coaches and advisors are knowledgeable and give us a fair chance to participate. Equipment is functional and facilities are well maintained.

**A B C D F**

COMMENT: \_\_\_\_\_

**5. SECURE, SAFE & CLEAN** Consideration: School is safe from violence and negative outside elements. Staff security is competent and diligent about upholding school security standards without denying our personal liberty and rights.

**A B C D F**

COMMENT: \_\_\_\_\_

**6. POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION PLANNING** Consideration: Faculty does a good job of preparing me to be successful in a career of choice at a good college. Counselors are well-informed and allow me time to discuss important options that give me the best chance to success after high school.

**A B C D F**

COMMENT: \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_

School \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_



# New Expression School Essay Contest: **What's Your Point!**

## Question of the month **Are School Discipline Codes Working?**

### **JUDGING CRITERIA**

LEAD – assertive, clear, and concise. Writer demonstrates deep understanding of the issue.

ARGUMENT – persuasive, objective tone, fact-based. Writer conveys broad knowledge of topic.

REBUTTAL – considers merits of opposite points of view. Writer challenges alternative positions through evaluation.

CONCLUSION – summarizes key points in essay. Writer conveys benefits of position taken in logical and compelling manner.

STYLE – writer employs proper grammar, spelling and punctuation. The essay can be easily read by students.

### **AWARDS**

The winning entries will receive \$100 and each runner-up will receive \$50 each. Winning essays will be printed in the next issue of New Expression.

### **SUBMISSION GUIDELINES**

Applicants must be under 20-years-old and enrolled in a Chicago school. Essays must be less than 400 words. Hand-written applicants will not be considered.

All entries are due by January 15, 2007 and must be submitted with a cover note/letter identifying:  
Applicant's Full Name, Home Address, City, State and Zip Code  
Phone Number, Email Address, Age, Grade  
School, English Teacher or Journalism advisor (if available)

Submit your cover note and essay via:  
Email: [editor@newexpression.org](mailto:editor@newexpression.org) or Fax: 312-922-7151



# photo opinion

Probably some New Years resolutions I have is to probably get a job, learn to ride a Unicycle, and maybe to stop using the computer so much. Personally I think New Year's Resolutions are kind of ridiculous. People set these expectations and try to changed themselves which is usually really unnecessary. I don't usually set New Year's Resolutions. If you have something you genuinely want to achieve or change, then why have it be a New Year's Resolution, instead of just a goal that you really focus on completing? Resolutions are kind of fun but I don't think anyone should take them seriously.

**Sarah Winters, age 15, Northside College Prep**

Well, you know as a student it's a lot of things to consider when picking out some New Years resolutions such as school, jobs, etc. A slogan I had last year for football was to kill or be killed. In other words, do your best or get ran over, and then my thing for money is "big money or no money", which basically means don't settle for the little things; go for the highest goals. I apply these slogans to my life. I'd like to get a higher GPA and get a better job, also to keep improving my game in football. Oh and I hope for less drama this upcoming year.

**Nathaniel Smith, 17, Curie High School**

My New Years resolution is to finish my stories I've been working on, and to probably tell my mom about my new boyfriend. In general, I believe in New Years resolutions because you have to be motivated, and those people tend to hold on to their resolutions. Other people are just lazy and give up.

**Eryca Philips, age 16, Perspective Charter School**

I don't really have any New Years resolutions because I don't keep up with them. Some that I did have was to stop eating a lot of junk food but I didn't carry that one out. I think New Years resolutions depend on the person. Like if they are really determined to do it then they should, but people like me don't really keep up with them.

**Blanca Aguiniga, Age 17, Lane Tech College Prep High School**

I'll try to keep my word about doing better in school and write more plays and stories. The thing about New Years resolutions is that you keep them for the first couple of months and then a month later it pops up in the back of your head and you're like "Hey, I was suppose to do that!"

**Majdi Badri, age 17, Lincoln Park High School**





## Parent Too Soon

**By Adriana Woods**

North Lawndale College Prep

Teen pregnancy is a huge thing in the United States so I decided to see how it feels to be a teen mom. Well the reason why I decided to do teen pregnancy because I thought it was an interesting fact and a lot of people I know have kids and there not even sixteen years old. The United States has higher rate of teen pregnancy then China and Japan who together has more then six billion people in population.

The reason I why I believe teens should not get pregnant because majority teens can not handle it. Being a teen mother is very difficult because some teens have no one to help them out. I don't believe teens know what they are getting themselves into and the responsibly that they are faced with. Teens are not ready for pregnancy physically, emotionally, and mentally.

Another reason why teens are not ready for pregnancy is because they are too young to take care of a child. They can not take care of a child because they are still children and they depend on their parents. I also believe parents should sit down and talk to their kids about sex and the outcome because it only takes three minutes of pleasure, nine months of pain, eighteen years of raising and a lifetime regret.

T.H.I.N.K., Things Happen If No Knowledge. Think about it; are you ready to be a mother and give up your life to take care of someone else? It's hard to take care of someone when you want to hang out side with your friends instead your taking care of a child. So think before you give up your life.

In conclusion, being a teen parent is not what you want to be because it is not easy. Being a teen mother is not a road you want to take because this means that you have shorten your goals and you just put your dreams on hold for the next eighteen years. So before you have sex, think about whether or not you want to risk getting pregnant or not.

## TESS Skincare

**By Whitney Helm**

Young Women's Leadership Charter School

Have you searched for a skincare line to get rid of the pimples on your face? Well, the solution may be at your local Sephora store.

Teens Everyday Skincare System (TESS) is quickly becoming the new teen fad. TESS was created by Susan Shand and her friends after feeling a void for a skincare line that would help their teenage daughters.

"I felt a need to create something for my daughter and her friends. I searched for years to find a natural based skincare regimen that could help her learn how to take better care of her skin. I wanted them to feel better about themselves through self-care. TESS was developed out of frustration (there was nothing out there) and love (I wanted the best for my daughter). The more mothers we spoke to, the more we realized that the feeling was universal. The more teens we talked to, the more they told us what they wanted. They helped create this line. Everything requested—from the scents to no animal testing to the product names—came from the teens," said Shand.

Using her former experience as a marketing editor of Teen Magazine, she began to build TESS. TESS uses natural ingredients and stresses the importance of proper skincare, which includes staying away from adult products.

"The skin of teens and adults are entirely different and has different needs. Sometimes using products for older skin can cause problems. The products can be too strong for young skin. They can cause

dryness, breakouts and increase oil production," said Shand.

It's important to start healthy skincare early. Oftentimes if you begin early you can avoid trouble later on. Your skin goes through changes as your body develops.

"By getting a head start with a good skincare routine, you can avoid skin damage from the sun and elements, skin cancer, [and] other skin issues including acne and wrinkles later in life" said Shand.

TESS products contain unique paraben-free blends of nature's finest ingredients including Aloe Vera gel, Lavender oil, extracts of chamomile, green tea, hibiscus Flower, comfrey, white willowbark, lemon peel, apple, and strawberry, to name a few.

TESS has an advisory panel, which derived from the founders asking mothers and daughters what they wanted in a product. The TESS Advisory Panel consists of girls ages 13-17 from across the country, who help the company with everything from naming products, choosing scents, packaging designs, and marketing strategies. TESS not only helps improve teens' skin, but it also strives to encourage them.

"I hope to make a difference in the lives of teens. They often battle with low self-esteem and I wanted to find a way to make them feel better about themselves. All of our products feel good, smell amazing, make their skin look and feel better, and our packaging inspires them with messages of strength and empowerment." Shand said.



# Stuff the Turkey, Not Yourself:

By Nikita Burns, Morgan Park H.S.

10 ways to effortlessly burn a few calories this holiday season while having fun!

The holidays are here, and during this time of year people tend to pack on a few pounds. It is okay to take a break from the diet and enjoy a home cooked meal with the family, but here are a few simple suggestions to help you exercise without doing too much.

## TIPS FOR THE HOLIDAYS

1. Take the dog for a long walk through the neighborhood. This way you can walk off the turkey, stuffing, and pie, while also enjoying the outside.

2. Try parking your vehicle further from the building than usual and walk. You can even think about the things you want to purchase on your way to the door.

3. Spread some cheer and become a volunteer at your local shelter during the holiday season, helping out with everything from wrapping packages to delivering hot meals.

4. Go Christmas shopping! Walking around in a large mall or shopping center makes for great activity and great fun. Try not to spend too much.

5. Build a snowman if you can. It's fun and involves a lot of arm work.

6. Go out and rake some leaves. You'd like the end result and would have exercised at the same time.

7. Bake some homemade holiday bread. It's great exercise due to the kneading of the bread. But YOU don't eat too much of it.

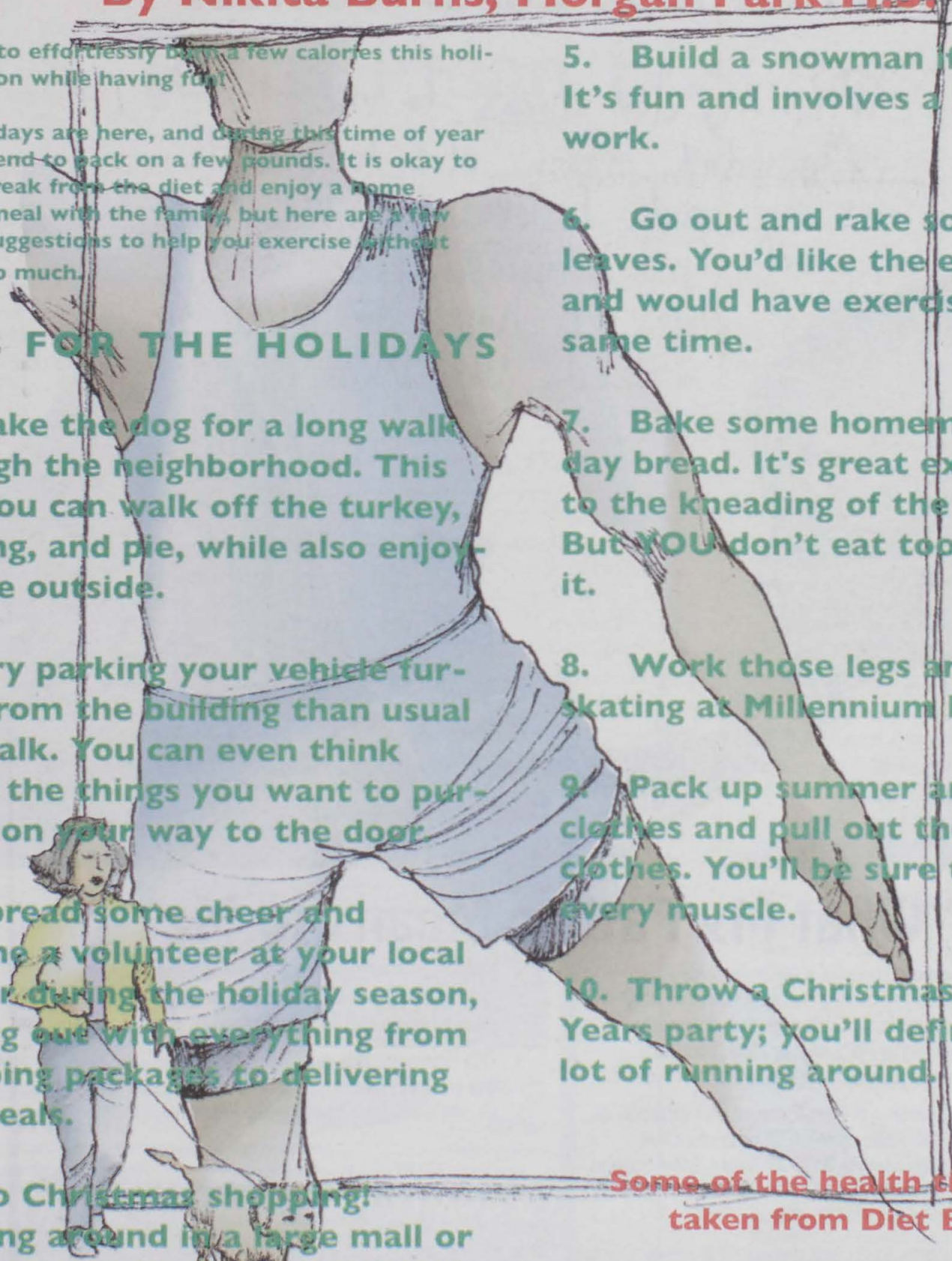
8. Work those legs and go ice skating at Millennium Park

9. Pack up summer and fall clothes and pull out the winter clothes. You'll be sure to work every muscle.

10. Throw a Christmas or New Years party; you'll definitely do a lot of running around.

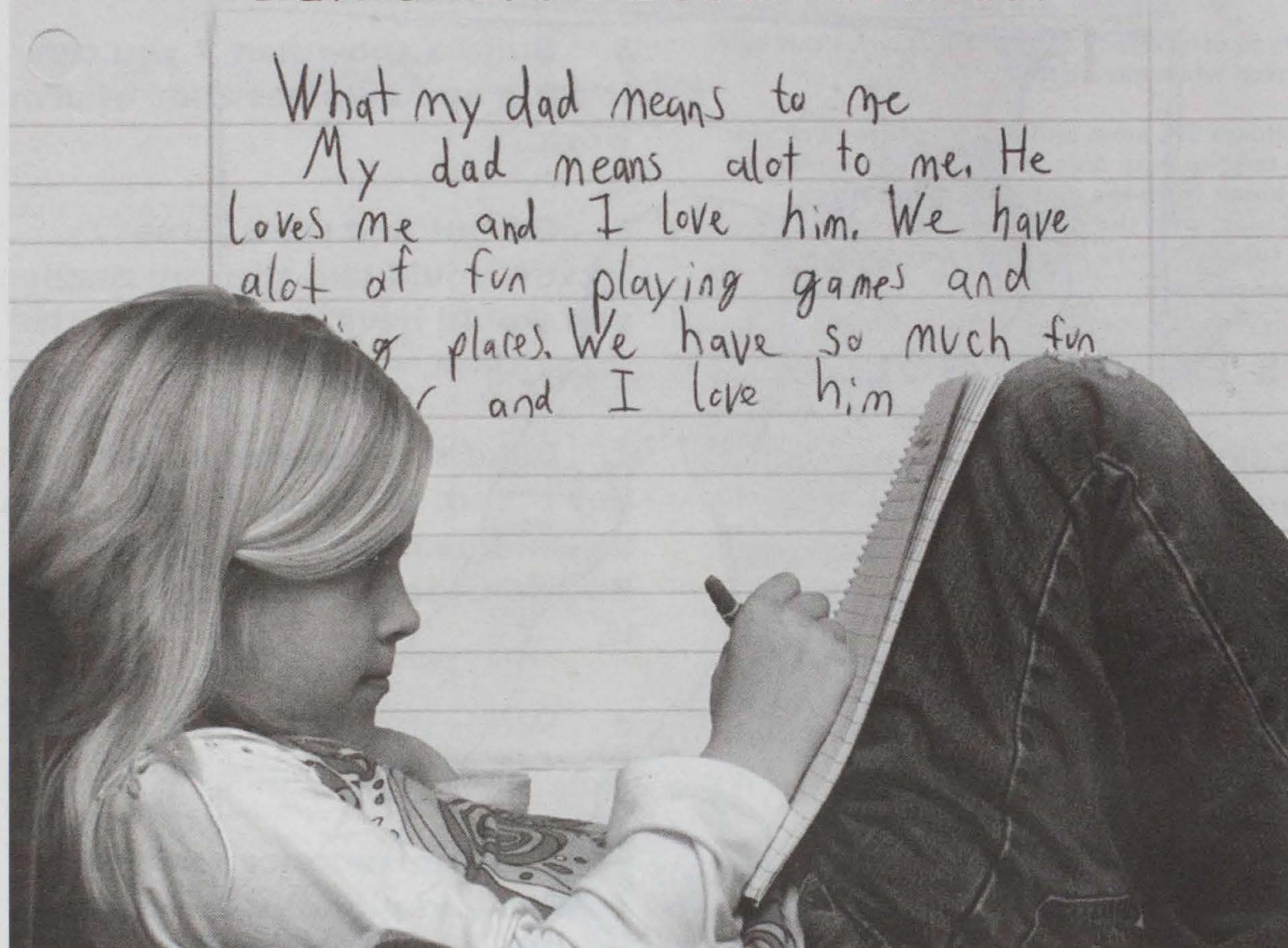
Some of the health tips were taken from Diet Bites

[www.dietbites.com/holiday-diet-](http://www.dietbites.com/holiday-diet-)





# 2007 IFI / Chicago White Sox Fatherhood Essay Contest



## "What My Father Means to Me"

- Each student is asked to write a 250 word (or less) essay on the theme "What My Father Means to Me," describing their relationship with their father or father figure. Father figures can include: uncles, brothers, coaches, or other persons of influence to the student.
- Each student will receive a Certificate of Participation as well as coupons for other prizes. Each student will also have a chance to win a \$1,000 Bright Start college scholarship and an invitation to the May 2007 Faces of Fatherhood Celebration at U.S. Cellular Field.
- The Top 100 Schools that participate in the Essay Contest will be awarded a Best Buy Gift Card, compliments of IFI.
- Twelve of the essay finalists and their Fathers or Father Figures will be invited to attend the June, 2007 IFI Fatherhood Celebration Dinner in Chicago.
- Essay contest materials will be available online in November at [www.4fathers.org](http://www.4fathers.org). Look for emails to your schools in mid-November.
- The contest officially begins on December 1, 2006 and the essays need to be postmarked to be sent back to the IFI office no later than Friday March 9, 2007.

### Thank you for participating!

The Essay Contest is run in partnership with the Illinois State Board of Education, the Chicago Public Schools, the Office of Catholic Education, Archdiocese of Chicago and the National Center for Fathering.





## Teens Mean Business

*E Teen profile*

Most people have heard the old sayings, "Hard work pays off," and "If at first you don't succeed, try again." Alexis Warnick knows first-hand the value of these truisms because today the 17-year-old owns her own business.

Warnick, a senior at South Shore School of Entrepreneurship, began designing her business concept about two years ago while attending the Institution for Entrepreneurship

(I.E.E.), an after school program. Her business, Mind Behind the Photo, focuses on unique photography and tee-shirt design.

"I've always been interested in photography," Warnick says. "But I took a strong interest when learning about entrepreneurship in the I.E.E. Small Business Ownership Program."

The articulate senior says her interest became even stronger when she learned that she could apply her

artistic skills to her own business.

Warnick's photographic work is already being noticed by professionals. Her photos of local boxer James Allen are featured in Yep! Magazine (Nov. 2006), including the magazine's cover photo.

She says her work is unique and that she makes a conscious effort not to duplicate any one else's style. Warnick is also concerned with pleasing her customers. She advises other young business owners to "keep trying until you meet your customers' expectations."

The young business owner says that being an entrepreneur has not affected her social life because she has learned to set priorities and boundaries. "If you do what you need to do, when you need to do it, then it's no problem," says Warnick.

Warnick advises other youth who might be considering becoming an entrepreneur to "Get your main idea together and set yourself some goals."

"I had to step outside my boundaries," Warnick says.

She would like to increase her photography experience and attend Columbia College Chicago.

Warnick's advice to anyone with doubts about a successful entrepreneurship is "All it takes is an idea to make something happen."

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## IB on It?

**By Nikita Burns**  
Morgan Park

Requiring a 4,000 word research paper and a minimum of 150 hours of participation in extracurricular activities and community services, the International Baccalaureate Program encourages students to be active learners, well-rounded individuals and engaged world citizens.

Although The International Baccalaureate Program (IB) is one of the most widely recognized pre-university educational programs in the world, surprisingly, many teens know nothing about it. According to the International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO), the program was founded in 1968 and works with 1,895 schools in 124 countries to develop and offer three challenging programs to over 487,000 students ages 3 to 19 years.

Furthermore, the program consists of three programs, including the primary years program, the middle years program, and the diploma program. The Primary Years Program is for pupils ages 3 to 12 and focuses on the development of the whole child in the classroom and in the world outside. The Middle Years Program, for pupils ages 11 to 16, provides a framework of academic challenge and life skills, achieved through embracing and transcending traditional school subjects. The Diploma Program for students ages 16 to 19 is a demanding two-year curriculum leading to final examinations and a qualification that is welcomed by leading universities around the world.

Each program includes an intense curriculum, student assessment appropriate to the age range, professional development for teachers, and a process of school authorization and evaluation. The IB Diploma Program is, however, the most valued. Successful IB Diploma candidates are typically granted advanced placement credit at the finest universities and colleges in the nation. Students who participate in the entire diploma program are actively engaged in a rigorous liberal arts curriculum. Currently, more than one-third of IB programs are located in the United States, where the number of students in the program has tripled in the last 10 years. In Illinois, there are 32 schools that have either the Middle Years Program or the

Diploma Program. Schools such as Roald Amundsen High School, William Howard Taft High School, Morgan Park High School, Locke Elementary School, Hyde Park Academy, and Curie Metropolitan High School are all IB World Schools. Vanessa Waters, a 7 year old IB Diploma Senior at Morgan Park High School said, "The IB program is a great opportunity because of the international accreditation, but does not allow students to branch out socially."

Sade Scott, also an IB senior at Morgan Park High School feels that, the IB program is overrated.

"I could have taken Advanced Placement Classes outside of IB. They make it seem that you will automatically get a full scholarship, but that is not true. I am too isolated and with the same students all the time."

In response to the isolation problem that the students seem to have, Edna Brown, the International Baccalaureate Coordinator at Morgan Park High said, "IB students should be flexible and mature enough to move through other social groups. The program is the best that a high school student can get involved with." Recently this past October at Morgan Park High School, the IB Diploma Program began Big Siblings, Little Siblings Program, which was created to provide help and guidance for IB freshmen who may be having trouble adjusting to the curriculum and the high school in general.

Meanwhile, the program is still developing. IB seniors were paired with IB freshmen and had a brief meeting. The program has since failed to progress. IB freshmen were looking forward to the program but as a disappointment nothing has transpired.

Ms. Edna Brown said, "In the near future, the program may get moving and actually be beneficial to IB freshmen at Morgan Park High School."

International Baccalaureate Organization <http://www.ibo.org/>

## See Students Leading, Learning, & Living

**By: Camille J. Villegas**  
Clemente High School

Students were leading, learning, and living at the Harris Fellows Student Leadership Conference, Saturday, November 18, 2006 at Harold Washington College.

Harris Fellows is a student led organization that gives \$2,500 grants to organizations and schools that are planning to start student led programs.

Ken Hunter, principal at Prosser High School, started the conference with empowering words to teens of Chicago and Nashville. By the end of the conference, the youth felt equipped to be vigorous leaders for the future.

Students from Clemente High School's Youth Empowerment Committee, Curie Forefront, Kenwood Academy's Brotherhood, Roosevelt's Student Council and Voices of Students from Senn High School were all grantees from last year's conference. These leadership programs attended the conference to reveal proven strategies, which they used within their schools and communities.

Many other student organizations also attended the event including Purple Rain, Just Us Fellas, Teens Making a Change (TMAC), and many more.

Purple Rain is an organization for teen girls who have been physically and verbally abused. It and Just Us Fellas demonstrated how any organization can "flip the script" and use multimedia to create positive public service announcements to combat the problem and draw attention. TMAC provided the perspective of relevance, rigor, and relationships from the students' point of view. The session focused on how to strengthen relationships between students within school.

Teachers and adult allies for student programs attended the "Working Effectively with Student Leaders" workshop. In the workshop, the adults participated in role plays. They were given a problem and were required to come up with a solution.

"Everything was great, my peers and I came together in a professional environment and we learned from each other. I had never experienced something like that." Said Anthony Aguinaldo from Clemente High School.

**For more information about Harris Fellows you can contact Jon Schmidt at [jjschmidt@cps.k12.il.us](mailto:jjschmidt@cps.k12.il.us).**



# Has the Educational System Failed Us!

By Cynthia Collins

Our Lady of Tepeyac High School

Art, drama, and music have lead children on the paths of exploring as well as discovering themselves. Educators are the keys to every child dreams, from teaching them to think outside the box, from multiplying their dreams. Our educational system are Planning on taking Art, drama and music out of the school systems to save more money inside the schools. Educators are contradicting their places in every child lives by not giving them the opportunity to define, create change and test themselves to unlimited heights; and raising the stakes of drop out rates.

Maybe people are right when they make the statement saying, the world is all about money and not about helping others. Yes taking these extra curricular activities out of the learning environment will provide more money for other things such as better computers in a school or possible better construction if needed. These things are never the less important but the construction of the school and the technology inside a computer is not what makes a child pursue to his or her greatest heights. It is the educators and the things that help the child define their own definition of pursuance. Having a class that directs a child into defining themselves, such as, art are one of the goals of the school system. In art a child receives the advantages of creating their own world, which steers them into possibly create change in the world around them. Art also allows a child to see the world through other peer's eyes and began to understand other people of different cultures and other races. Having art in high school, gives the children early advantages to having a tool, to begin to test their own world before college. Taking Art out the schools system will delete a child ability to imagine their

prospect ivies on the world.

It is one thing to imagine your world, but to be able to live it on action is outstanding. Drama gives you the outstanding opportunity to have situations and find your way out of them. Drama also ~~you~~ become anything you want to be and giving you a backbone of confident. These are the things kids need in high school. They need strong personalities, confidents, wit and to under go self-reflection. Colleges want to see a child who has these things. These are the things that can make a child independently successful. Teaching a child is great but for a child to have confident in what they do are what makes them excel. Drama also allows a child to develop their personality finding out what they like and what they do not. To be a child and able to find what you want to do in life before college is wonderful thing and saves money for them and their family. Taking drama out of the schools system will be a lack of a child finding confident and not be afraid of using it.

The educators believe that taking money away from extra curricular activities such as drama, art, and music they can put money more into English, math, history and science. They feel these are the things that tie together and will help a child in the real world. This is a true belief but to a certain existent. True is, that half the things you learn in high school will not be remembered by the time of graduation or in the real world. It is all depending on what field a person wants to go into. Many kids stick to the statement of all you need to know in the real world is to count your money, know how to read, and know your rights. Extra curricular activities tie in with everything to. That's why they should keep music in the

schools system. Music has always been known to bring different cultures and races and people of different ideals together. Music is just as important as English. Both are dealing with poetry and writing. English is writing on paper and music is writing with tunes to define usually the setting of what the writer is trying to say or express. Music brings understanding through its tunes. Music helps people come more in touch with some of their five senses. It allows you to feel what you are hearing and touch emotionally what you are feeling. Taking music out of the schools system will lessen the student coming together as a team. Educators teach children to think for themselves and use what they learn to apply them themselves. They also are one of the key components outside of the community and living environment to encourage kids. The Educating system will be failing the children if their plans are to take art, drama, and music out of the schools. Each one of these extra curricular activities shares a major part in every Childs life. All the extra curricular activities teaches a child to have confident, enter act with people at of different views, races and cultures, and help some to began to construct their careers at early ages. These are thing that need to be in school not taken out. Extra curricular activities are the things that make up a school and Things College look for. These extra curricular activities build a child emotionally and mentally. These are the areas an educator should stand and encourage a child not look, and take it away. If a educator take away art, drama and music than it is believed children will show lest interest in schools and want to drop out or put forth less effort to excelling.



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by David Hughes

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HOLD ON--  
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IT APPEARS SO. I GUESS I LL HAVE TO DO SOMETHING SO  
HORRIBLE THAT SANTA WILL HAVE SUCH AN INSANE  
VENDETTA THAT HE LL MOVE CHRISTMAS EARLIER JUST TO  
PUNISH ME. GENIUS!



Y KNOW,  
SANTA  
GETS LESS  
GULLIBLE  
OVER THE  
YEARS.





# BY MARTELL MORROW AND CHRISTOPHER PEGUES

## SOUTH SHORE H.S.





# One on One with 2XL

by Tywana Lesley

Rap duo, Bennett "Laze" and Justin "Royal" Talmage Armstrong of 2XL, are "bustin'" out with a new CD, "Neighborhood Rapstar", in January, 2007. The adorable twins, who have been songwriting since the age of ten, have recently signed on with Tommy Boy Entertainment, "emerging as the next generation of teen superstars to capture the spotlight in the hip hop arena." "Neighborhood Rapstar" is about the lives of two courageous young men who overcame adversity and used their music to bring their fans together. They have received massive amounts of airplay with their singles, "Kissing Game", "Kitty Kat", and "Hustle's Gone", just to name a few. These two young men are ready to showcase their talent around the world. Fortunately, NE was able to talk with them about their success, their friends, their cancer sickened, yet supportive, mother, their influences, their motivation, and much much more.

**Tywanna:** Where are you guys from?

**Laze:** We're from L.A., born and raised. We've been in North Hollywood for three and a half years.

**Tywanna:** Do you have any siblings?

**Royal City:** Yes, we have a half sibling from my mom's first marriage. We have a brother in Texas who's twenty-three. We have a sister; she's like forty, who lives in Chicago. We don't know her. We have other brothers in Texas we don't know, but we know we have them.

**\*\*2XL site:** Who's the oldest, Laze or Royal?

**RC:** I'm the older one so I get all of the privileges. He's (Laze) still a baby so I get to boss him around.

**L:** Not at all. He's the older man, but by only two minutes, so, you know, we were born two minutes apart.

**RC:** So, I get two minutes more of privileges, love from the ladies.

**T:** Was it easy for you growing up?

**L:** I would definitely not say easy. Our mom got diagnosed with cancer at a really young age. We were young when she was diagnosed

with cancer in the brain. We raised ourselves almost. She could not walk. It was hard, especially not having a father. It was just us two; we had to teach ourselves right from wrong. We saw so many things. In 2004, our mom was diagnosed with cancer again and then a third time about seven months ago. They said she was going to die. That was about six months ago; she's still here. She's at home right now bedridden, but she's staying positive and she's very supportive. She always wants to know what's going on; she be at home wearing the 2XL t-shirts. She put just as much in our career as we did.

**T:** How are you able to continue your education, while in the music industry?

**L:** We're home-schooled right now. We're with a program called the City of Angels. We've been with them for two or three years.

**T:** Do you plan to attend college?

**L:** Yes, definitely, without a doubt. We both want to go to UCLA and major in business marketing.

**T:** Do you have time to communicate with your friends?

**RC:** It's really hard, to tell you the truth. Prior to our success, we were like in a click of 40 people. A lot of people did not understand when we couldn't go a lot of places. A lot of friends have babies; a lot of them are on drugs. We have to be focused. We stay in the studio until five in the morning. We still have our main four friends who have been there from the start.

**T:** Have you established new friendships with other music artists?

**L:** Yea, the majority of the people around now are in the music industry. Mostly, they're local artists on the up and coming.

**T:** Do you have time for romantic relationships?

**RC:** We do. We definitely do. Right now, we

are both currently single. We're looking for somebody that understands what we're doing. We haven't found anybody yet. It would be nice to have a girl, a homey to kick it with.

**T:** What or who motivates you?

**L:** All the people who said we couldn't do it. Everybody who turned us down, that's what keeps us motivated.

**T:** What sacrifices have you made in order to pursue your music?

**RC:** Probably, all around, being a real teenager and being away from our mom.

**T:** How did you start your music career?

**L:** We started recording by ourselves, passing out our CDs in the rain. In 2003, we were signed to a production company. We've been in a magazine. We threw out songs to the radio. We were doing mix tapes. We threw a record out in February/ March. We sold records independently. We got signed on our birthday, April 2nd.

**\*\*2XL site:** What's it like being signed to Tommy Boy Records?

**RC:** Getting signed to Tommy Boy, it's a crazy feeling because we young in this rap game and now we're a part of a label that has a history. Every single act they've ever had: De La Soul, Coolio, Queen Latifah, Digital Underground. I mean, those are all historical acts in hip hop and now we're a part of that family so it feel really good but it's also a big weight carried on our shoulders, but we gonna take it to the top. We like that weight, that pressure.

**T:** Have you started touring?

**L:** We're doing radio promos. We're starting a couple of tours in the west coast. Hopefully, we're coming to Chicago. We have a lot of stuff lined up from radio stations. We're on promo tours now.

....Next Page



**T:** Have you performed with other artists?

**RC:** We collaborated with our cousins from Cherish. Before we recorded, we were kickin' it in the studio and we came back to L.A. and we found out they were our cousins. E-40 is on two joints on our album. It would be crazy to work with Jay Z or Kanye West.

**T:** Do you have any musical mentors?

**RC:** Jay Z. That dude took being a rapper to the next level. He owns alcohol, clubs, a record label, and basketball teams. We're trying to do it like him. Musically, we look up to him.

**T:** Do you think hip hop music has a negative influence on young people?

**RC:** All that matters is the music. If you do any type of art, you gotta do it in a positive way. Hip hop is a culture. There's a lot of positive. Our music got a good vibe to it.

**T:** Do you try to imitate other artists or do you have your own style?

**RC:** We're not like anybody else. We have very distinctive voices, but we are influenced by a lot of artists.

**T:** Do you listen to other genres of music besides hip hop?

**RC:** We're big fans of music. We love a lot of oldies and soul like Ella Fitzgerald and Billie Holiday up until now like Nelly and Usher. We like good songs and good music. We may put on a pop artist or a rock artist here or there.

**T:** Are you interested in acting?

**L:** We actually did a little acting when we were younger. We're entertainers.

**T:** Do you two have any advice for young aspiring entertainers?

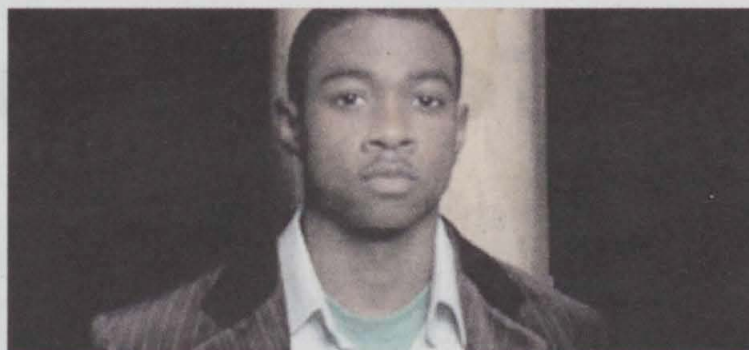
**RC:** Nowadays, you gotta be your own person or group. Don't let people take advantage of you. It do pay off. If you give 100%, you'll get that back. Really focus on yourself and do what you gotta do. We were in the rain selling our CDs. If you believe in yourself, you'll make it.

\*\* This quote was taken from the group's web site.

## MusicReview: Sammie

By Whitney Helm

Young Women's Leadership Charter School



Remember the song "I like it" by R&B artist, Sammie? The talented young singer was discovered by a grade school teacher and won "Apollo Kids", later releasing his debut CD, "From the Bottom to the Top", in 2000. After a six year hiatus to "be a kid", he has returned with his new mature self-titled album. Now 18, the kid friendly love songs have been replaced with funky beats from Jazzy Pha and one song entitled "What about your friend" in which Sammie rejects a girl for her friend. This album lyrically tells about a young man who has matured in his time out of the spotlight and provides songs that even older folks can groove to. Love songs, such as "Mission Impossible" and "Back 2 Love", will make anyone want to take back their girlfriend or boyfriend. Sammie also chronicles his struggle into adulthood. With the

song, "My Own Way", Sammie sings about breaking free from his mother's protection and "finding his own way", something many teens, especially seniors, can relate to.

Overall, the album was worth the six year wait; it is truly an album in which all teens can relate to. It is one of those rare findings that you can listen to from beginning to end, without skipping a track. The upbeat "club" songs make you want to dance around in your bedroom or car, while the love songs make you want to share them with someone special or make you long for a lost love. The songs on the album touch base with every thought or experience we, as teens, have had. I give this CD: 8/10 mics.



# editorial

## Are Black Males Priorities Straight?

By Camille J. Villegas

Clemente High School

In today's society, there are few African American males who are successful in America and who have significant influences on other black males.

Such role models include Earvin "Magic" Johnson, Senator Barack Obama, and Rev. Jesse Jackson; the list goes on. However, even though these talented males are making a great impact on the black communities, do black men, in general, have their priorities straight?

Prisons and jails are filled with Black and Latino males. African American boys as young as ten years of age are selling drugs and gang banging just to make a "quick dollar."

Some attend schools with failing curriculums, and can barely read at their grade level, while others attend school on a regular basis and are trying to change negative black male statistics. Once in a blue moon, one hears about a black male doing something positive in his school or community, however, we read and hear about blacks killing one another more often. While hip hop artists write lyrics about the "hood", sex, drugs, and alcohol, do they ever think about how this might affect the next generation?

Does American society want to see more blacks in jail than in office? As a young African American and Latino woman, I would love to see more people of color in office than in jail. Many blacks believe that because we came to America as slaves and laborers, it is destined that we stay at the bottom of the social totem pole. Some believe that black males are only supposed to take "black people" jobs as mailmen, drug dealers, construction workers, or even working at corner stores. What was the purpose of the Civil Rights Movement, if people have set low goals for themselves or none at all? Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and others fought so that we, as blacks and even browns, could have access to an education and better jobs.

In 2006, you still see many black young men on the corner selling drugs, gang banging, and stealing. However, you can also see African American males going to school and taking advantage of their education. You will see black males going off to college, and more blacks in politics, in economics, in the judicial system and in the educational profession. These men have their priorities straight and are planning their futures as successful black men; young black men, making a change in America's society.

## Teens & relationships

By Chardonay Henry

North Lawndale College Prep High School

What is a relationship? What does a teen look for in a relationship? Do teens today know what it is to be in a relationship? Do you think that one parent not being present in a child's life will effect how they react with future relationships? In some cases yes, the absence of one parent will affect the way a child will react to future relationships. For example, not having a male role model in your life is not good because there is nobody there to tell you what is right and what's wrong. Sure your mother is there to help guide you but without a male model it's different. Daughters need to have that daughter father bond. It's the same way with males and their father. The daughter is supposed to be daddy's little girl and the son is a mother's boy. After being or feeling abandoned by someone that you love you want somebody to just be there for you. Some people hang on to bad relationships just because that person or groups of people are there. Other people just look for attention in all the wrong places. For example, dating boys that who not your age, doing drugs, and hanging out all night. These are things that the average teenager would not do.

Without your parent being present for you growing up could lead to future problems. Maybe that is why so many people are confused about a lot of things such as relationships. Should teenagers date at a young age? It's not good emotionally because there could be a lot of mixed feelings about what you feel and what you want. Another reason could be peer pressure. Should you do something that your friends are doing even if you're not

ready or unsure of your decisions? If there is something that you want to do but fear the consequences why do it? There should be no pressure on you to make decisions that you don't want to make. A lot of teens get confused about positive friends and negative friends. Positive friends contribute good things to the friendship, and negative friends pressure you to do bad things. That is the difference; many people don't know the difference between the two.

Many reasons why teens don't know what decisions are right and which are wrong because they don't have that figure there to tell them. For some teens they tend to look for things in there mates that they are missing at home. Male's and female's tend to do this without even knowing it. The "Oedipus complex" is defined as a male child's unconscious desire for the exclusive love of his mother. The "Electra Complex" is an ambiguous psychiatric concept which explains the maturation of the human female. It is said to be the female counterpart to the Oedipus complex in males. Does teens understand what what it means to be in a relationship? Teens really should really take into consideration while dating. I don't think that parents understand what teenagers go through in our everyday life. Parents should talk to their children to understand how their child feels about one parent not being present in their life. If more parents do this the world would be a better place with less confusion.



# Destroying Ourselves

By Shemika Cookbey

North Lawndale College Prep High School

We have been destroying ourselves for centuries and it still hasn't come to a stop. We inject ourselves with this horrid drug while still trying to kill each other over a dice game. When will we stop? Will we still continue with the rape, drugs, murder against ourselves? How can we stop this for generations to come?

We constantly talk about how the white man is trying to pull us down, when we ourselves further cause destruction. People everyday die over the overdose of drugs and we still continue to use them. Children and teens get molested and raped every hour of the day, that doesn't still stop the fathers and uncles from doing it to their children, nieces and nephews. Young ladies talk about each other, ready to fight because the girl has on a new outfit and they are hating; or the girl is ready to fight because the other girl is talking to their boyfriend and they feel that she is a threat.

When will we grow tired? Instead of encouraging them, the older men tell the younger ones that they don't have to worry about getting a job; they can work for them on the corner, because the quickest and

easiest money is drug money. But when will we stop looking for the easiest way out. Basketball is a sport that I truly admire; but that is the only thing that young men are looking forward to, because it's easy throwing a ball into a net. We figure it's hard to conduct surgery or argue their case in front of a jury, or even count some money for a bank or corporation.

"We need to start successful businesses in our community rather than trying to be a basketball player," Myleson Collins said. "We need to start communicating with each other also and not be all for ourselves." We don't fail because others try to bring us down; we fail because we have the strength and courage to pull ourselves up. Soon as a black-owned business comes to the neighborhood, we are ready to bust the windows or draw graffiti on the doors. For the young and old; when will we get out of this childish mindset? When will we grow up?

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Save the Date MAY 3<sup>rd</sup> - MAY 5<sup>th</sup>

**NETWORK** with young entrepreneurs from across the country  
**COMPETE** in business plan and expo competitions  
**PLAY** the reality game "Who Wants to be an Entrepreneur?"  
**PARTICIPATE** in skill building workshops  
**MEET** colleges and universities with entrepreneurship programs  
**LEARN** from experts in six different industries

Early registrants will be entered  
into a drawing for a  
**DIGITAL CAMERA!**

\*Teachers & adults registering 5 or more youth

Register for all 3 days and be eligible for  
thousands of dollars in grants and prizes!!!

1 Day registration available for Friday

Illinois teachers...earn CPDU's!

## Conference Location

Lincolnshire Marriott Resort  
Ten Marriott Drive  
Lincolnshire, Illinois

TO REGISTER OR FOR MORE INFORMATION....

Visit our website at [www.iiee.org](http://www.iiee.org) or call (312) 587-9296 ext. 5#



# essay winners

**By Patricia Casas, 15 years old  
Whitney Young High School**

**Winner**  
To many, the tradition of Thanksgiving causes people to become very emotional. Their tongues tingle, fantasizing about the piquant and scrumptious blends of flavors that their feasts will bring. A wide grin appears, for they recall the atmosphere of family unity, happiness, and, for some, a feeling of closeness with God. As if that is not enough, the fact that there is no school on the holiday is the cherry on top. However, to me, Thanksgiving means none of that. Personally, Thanksgiving strengthens the values that have guided me into a happy and more successful course of life.

Around the time of November, schoolchildren in grammar schools are often encouraged to color Thanksgiving scenes in class. These usually include pictures of Native Americans and Pilgrims preparing for and dining in a feast of fresh foods and vegetables. The schools seem to paint a picture of peace and harmony. However, personal research has revealed to me that Thanksgiving is more complex than publicly disclosed. This one day of thanks was succeeded by a history of war and violence between the settlers and the Natives. This illusion of peace quickly faded as the Native Americans' land was threatened by the invading Pilgrims. The seemingly genuine harmony between these two groups appeared and disappeared in a mist.

In addition, Thanksgiving seems more traditional than spiritual nowadays. Although many people put forth the effort to praise God and keep Him in mind that day, the commercial aspect plays the most significant role in the holiday. People become so preoccupied with the special holiday sales and the allusion of food and relaxation that they often forget about God. Furthermore, the upcoming season of Christmas carries them off like the tide into another wave of hysterical shopping and money spending.

Considering the above, I have conscientiously decided not to celebrate Thanksgiving. I do respect the beliefs of others and agree that experiencing mouth-watering food, family unity, and a relationship with God is not only good, but commendable. However, my personal desire for a genuine, close relationship with God every day of the year impels me to cling closely to the principles and values set in the Bible. I do not feel like I'm missing out because although sales come and go, because of my trying to follow God, I can be happy with my relationship with God and my family every day of the year.

## What Does Thanksgiving Mean to YOU?

**By Mary Strus, 15 years old  
Whitney Young High School**

**2nd place**  
For some people, Thanksgiving is just another holiday. It is simply a day off from school or work. It is a day when you eat a feast and just rest. Thanksgiving, however, has a meaning to it. Many countries throughout the world have a harvest festival of some kind. In North America, Thanksgiving is the most popular autumn celebration. In 1941, Congress permanently established the fourth Thursday of every November as a national holiday. Thanksgiving is when I am thankful for all of the wonderful and necessary things that I take for granted everyday. The first official Thanksgiving took place in 1621. Near the end of the Plymouth colony's first year in America, the settlers gave thanks for a plentiful first harvest. They thanked God and they also thanked the Native Americans for helping them learn how to grow food. They invited their Native American helpers, Squanto, Samoset, and Chief Massasoit, to share in their Thanksgiving feast. The Native Americans brought their families, numbering over ninety people. The Pilgrims were overwhelmed, and they didn't have enough food. The Wampanoags, however, brought turkey, deer, berries, squash, cornbread, and beans – foods that they had farmed and shown the Pilgrims how to care for. The pilgrims and Native

Americans gave thanks for the plentiful amount of food they had and for each other.

Thanksgiving is a holiday that both my family and I wait for all year. Even though my parents are immigrants from Poland, we still celebrate Thanksgiving. The house is decorated with an autumn theme. We have the usual Thanksgiving foods: turkey, sweet potatoes, cranberry sauce, and pumpkin pie. It is one of the best times of the year because the whole family is together. I have a chance to reflect on what I am thankful for. I am thankful for my family because they are my support system. I am also thankful for having a home to live in, food to eat, and clothes to wear. Thanksgiving is a day when I am truly thankful that I have all of these things, while others may not be fortunate enough to have them.

People are supposed to give thanks for all that they have in their life and be grateful that they have them. Thanksgiving is an American tradition and it needs to be celebrated by all Americans. It is a part of our culture, and we have to celebrate this beautiful tradition so it will not die.



By Adam Cohen, 14 years old  
Whitney Young High School

**2nd place**

Thanksgiving is a special time of the year. It is a time to be spent with family, and to give thanks that there are people who love us. We often take our families for granted. As much as we may forget, our families are there for us when no one else is. They help us during the bad times and guide us through the good times. While friends are replaceable, family is not. On Thanksgiving, people take a few moments to realize how great it is to have those you love all around you. The holiday is really not about the turkey and the football game. All of those things just make the time with your loved ones even more precious. The real meaning of Thanksgiving is to be able to have at least one weekend completely devoted to family. Another thing that comes to mind when I think of Thanksgiving is

the winter season. Growing up in Chicago, I have always loved winter. The snow, the break from school, and the overall feeling of winter appeal to me. Even though it is usually cold before Thanksgiving, the holiday marks the beginning of the real holiday season. There are already holidays such as Christmas and Hanukkah coming up in December. Next comes New Years, and then back to work. In conclusion, Thanksgiving should be looked at as a happy time of the year. It is a time to have fun with family, and a time to prepare for the upcoming holiday season. As you eat turkey around the big dining room table, remember to appreciate the people who you are eating with. Enjoy the company, and do not take the good times for granted. Most importantly, enjoy yourself.

# YOUTH EMPOWERMENT CENTER @ WORKING FOR TOGETHERNESS

for youth 13-24 years old



"The mission of the Youth Empowerment Center is to provide a safe space for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning youth and their straight allies ages 24 and under. We aim to affirm their identities, while also respecting diversity within our community. We provide social, cultural, and educational opportunities to empower young people and inspire positive social change."



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**WEDNESDAY: 12-6:30**  
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**FREE HIV & STD  
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**Free haircuts  
every Monday 5-8**

THE YOUTH EMPOWERMENT CENTER AND CAPA PROJECT are funded by a HRSA Special Projects of National Significance grant awarded to Working For Togetherness. The CAPA Project is a research collaboration between Working For Togetherness and the Division of Adolescent and Young Adult Medicine at John H. Stroger, Jr. Hospital of Cook County (Protocol # 05-231).



# COMMUNITY CALENDAR

DECEMBER

Sunday Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday

					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15 Hannukah Begins	16
17	18	19	20	21 Winter Solstice	22	23 Hanukkah Ends
24	25 Christmas	26 Kwanzaa Begins	27	28	29	30
31 New Year's Eve						